

AHKAAM -E- ITIKAAF

By
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Two Hadith

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ : ((مَنْ اعْتَكَفَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.

(الحديث)) (رواه الديلمي)

'Who ever performs I'tikaaf with firm belief to acquire reward their previous sins (minor) are forgiven.'

عَنْ عَائِشَةَ أَنَّهَا قَالَتْ السُّنَّةُ عَلَى الْمُعْتَكَفِ أَنْ لَا يَعُودَ مَرِيضًا وَلَا يَشْهَدَ جَنَازَةً وَلَا يَمَسَّ امْرَأَةً وَلَا يُبَاشِرَهَا وَلَا يَخْرُجَ لِحَاجَةٍ إِلَّا لِمَا لَا بُدَّ مِنْهُ وَلَا اعْتَكَافَ إِلَّا بِصَوْمٍ وَلَا اعْتَكَافَ إِلَّا فِي مَسْجِدٍ جَامِعٍ قَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ غَيْرُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ لَا يَقُولُ فِيهِ قَالَتْ السُّنَّةُ قَالَ أَبُو دَاوُدَ جَعَلَهُ قَوْلَ عَائِشَةَ

(رواه ابو داود في كتاب الاعتكاف في باب المعتكف يعود المريض)

Hadhrat Aisha (R.A) says, 'The Islamic ruling for one performing I'tikaaf is that they do not visit the sick, nor leave masjid to attend funeral prayers, do not have sexual intercourse, kiss or fondle ones wife, do not leave the masjid but for their absolute needs. There is no I'tikaaf without fasting, and I'tikaaf is not counted but in a masjid which has five times regular congregational prayers.'

Reviews

Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Mahmood Sahib

Damat Barakatuhum

Chief Mufti of Darul Uloom

After sending Salutations on the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam)

The people of knowledge are fully aware of the importance of I'tikaaf and the need for its rules to be widely available. To fulfil this need Moulana al Haaj Mufti Ismail Hussain Sahib has wrote this booklet. He has noted his sources so that it becomes easy for those sifting through strong, weak, and desirable traditions. May Allah Ta'ala give blessings in the Author's knowledge and actions and make this and his other works beneficial to the people?

Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Saeed Muhammed Yahya Sahib

Head Mufti, Madressa Mazahirul Uloom

I have read most parts of Moulana Mufti Ismail Sahib's booklet 'The Virtues & Rules of I'tikaaf'. I have also checked the sources of the rules that have made the booklet authentic. May Allah Ta'alah reward the Author and make the Mu'takif (one performing I'tikaaf) reap its benefits?

Forward

Moulana Saeed Ahmed Sahib Palanpuri, teacher at Darul Uloom Deoband

I have in front of me Moulana Mufti Ismail Sahib's book 'I'tikaaf'. The subject of the book is clear from the name. I'tikaaf is one of the special worships attributed to Ramadan and especially to its last ten days. The essence of I'tikaaf is to disassociate oneself from everything and to engage in the worship of Allah Ta'ala, and to select a corner of the mosque for the constant worship and remembrance of Allah Ta'ala.

It is crystal clear that there can be no greater blessing than for one to cut off from all social contact and fall at the threshold of the Creator, as though one has fallen at someone's feet for mercy. One always remembers and thinks about him. Praising, exalting and asking His forgiveness. Crying upon ones sins and faults, and requesting the mercy and forgiveness of the Most Merciful, one seeks the closeness and happiness of Allah; in this manner one spends his days and nights in Allah's worship.¹

I'tikaaf has many other benefits as mentioned,

1. Meeting and dealing with people tends to cause one to sin, but a person performing I'tikaaf is protected from this as mentioned in Hadith, 'One performing I'tikaaf is protected from sins.'
2. One performing I'tikaaf leaves his home and family and comes at the door of Allah, in effect the epic of closeness one can achieve in this temporary world can be achieved

with the action of I'tikaaf. It is mentioned in Hadith Qudsi that Allah Ta'ala says, 'whoever comes close to me by a span I come closer to him by two span. Whoever walks towards me, I run towards them.' Just imagine the closeness that one achieves to Allah through I'tikaaf and the Mercy that must descend on him.

3. Whilst performing I'tikaaf one is constantly gaining reward of worship. If a Mu'takif (one performing I'tikaaf) is silent, sleeps or performs any other duties, he is constantly gaining reward.
4. If a Mu'takif is gaining reward every second then there is no better opportunity to seek Laylatul Qadr (Night of Power). Whenever Laylatul Qadr happens the Mu'takif will always be in a state of worship

It is abundantly clear that one is rewarded for worship if Allah Ta'ala accepts that action. One evident sign of an act being accepted is that it is carried out according to the teachings of Shariat.

The reason for Moulana Mufti Ismail Sahib writing this book is so to guide the people performing I'tikaaf so that their I'tikaaf is completed following the right procedures. Let us all pray Allah Ta'ala fulfill the writers' good intentions and give the Ummat the ability to gain maximum benefit from it. Ameen Ya Rabb al Aalameen

Saeed Ahmed Palanpuri, Servant of Darul Uloom Deoband
16 Jamadiuth Thani, 1398 Hijri

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Saeed Ahmed Palanpuri, Servant of Darul Uloom Deoband
16 Jamadiuth Thani, 1398 Hijri

Preface

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم أما بعد:

I Start in the Name of Allah Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

All praise and Salutation on his Noble Prophet ﷺ

Every minute of Ramadan is valuable as it encompasses thousands of goodness and blessings within itself. If one performs Nafil therein, he receives the reward of performing Faradh, and one performing Faradh receives reward of 70 Faraaidh. The importance and value that the last ten days of Ramadhan hold is not hidden from anybody.

Even in this turmoil period there remains Servants of Allah who recognise and try to acquire the true value of Ramadan. From amongst these servants is my mentor and teacher Hadhrat Sheikh ul-Hadith Moulana Muhammad Zakariyah Sahib (Damat barakatuhum). When people refused to travel for Hajj due to difficulties, the Mujaddid of his time Hadhrat Aqdas Sayyad Ahmed Shahid Berelwi (Rahmatullahi alayhi) performed his Hajj with a large group of followers and instilled in them such valour that even today the numbers performing Hajj are increasing, and hopefully will be the case till Qiyamat (Day of Judgement).

Similarly Hadhrat Sheikh despite his old age and with his busy schedule has been performing I'tikaaf for the whole month of Ramadan since 1348 Hijri. Hence, he has managed to re-awaken this Sunnat and develop an importance and urge in people that thousands, even today and hopefully till Qiyamah, will carry on doing I'tikaaf!

Thousands of people from all walks of life performed I'tikaaf with Hadhrat Sheikh Sahib (Damat barakatuhum). Their need of understanding rules and regulations of I'tikaaf were easily fulfilled by the numerous Mufti's performing I'tikaaf. Even then most elders were of the opinion that the virtues and rules of I'tikaaf should be gathered and written down in easy to understand Urdu so that it could benefit all. It will benefit those who perform I'tikaaf, and become a continuous charity for the one who gathers all this information. Hence after much hesitation, being aware of the lack of ability and knowledge, this Servant gathered some pages, may Allah Ta'ala bless it with success, make it a treasure for the next life and beneficial for the Ummat of Muhammad (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam)? Aameen

Ismail Kacholwi (may Allah forgive him)

Jameah Dabhel, 1st Rabiul Akhir 1398

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allah most Beneficial most Merciful

Rewards for performing I'tikaaf

This chapter deals with the rewards and blessings of I'tikaaf, for this purpose I relate chapter 3 of the book 'Fazail Ramadan' written by my Spiritual leader and teacher Hadhrat Aqdas Sheikh ul Hadith Sahib (Damat barakatuhum) for the purpose of blessings. Just as Allah gave that book general acceptance, may He also accept this book? *Aameen*

Hadhrat Aqdas Sheikh ul Hadith Sahib (Damat barakatuhum) writes in his book 'Fadhail Ramadan',
The reward for I'tikaaf is great as indicated by the fact that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) always used to perform I'tikaaf. The example of him who resides in the masjid for I'tikaaf is that of a person who, having gone to a certain place to appeal for something, remains there until it is granted.

*May my last breath break at your feet
this is my desire, this is my longing*

If someone comes begging at our door and then refuses to leave until his request has been granted, Then I am certain that even the person with the hardest heart amongst us will eventually give into his request. Allah is such that he is looking for excuses to forgive, Ah! He gives even without an excuse.

*You are such a Giver
Your doors of Mercy are always open*

*Ask Musa how much the Lord gives
Went to get fire and receives prophethood*

When one disassociates and begs at the door of Allah, what doubts are there that he will be granted? If Allah grants then who can describe His treasures? I am helpless to say more, how can a child explain the ecstasies of youth? Hold firm to the following,

*The flower which has been given it's heart
the flower which I am devoted to
Either I acquire it
or die in trying*

Allaamah Ibn Qayyim writes that the true aim is to divert the heart away from everything except Allah, and to come closer to Him, thereby forming a complete spiritual connection with the Creator. All worldly connections are cut off for the sake of gaining Allah's attention and all thoughts, desires, love and devotion become centred on Him. As a result attachment with Allah is attained; love and friendship that will be the only solace in the loneliness of the grave. Can one possibly imagine the great ecstasy with which that time in the grave will be spent?

*My heart yearns for the opportunity day & night
that I sit thinking about my lover*

The author of Maraqiyul Falaah writes that when I'tikaaf is performed properly and sincerely, is among the most virtuous deeds. One cannot possibly enumerate all the great advantages and benefits in it. In I'tikaaf one has to draw the heart away from everything, give the soul up to the Creator and submit oneself at His doorstep.

*My intention is to fall at someone's door
with the burden weighting my head down*

All the time, one remains in a state of worship, even when one is asleep, one is still in His worship striving for His nearness. Allah

says (according to a Hadith): 'Whoever draws near to Me (the length of) one hand, then I draw nearer to him (the length of) two hands, and whoever draws near to Me by walking, I draw nearer to him by running.' Moreover, in I'tikaaf one seeks refuge in the house of Allah, and is safe therein from all enemies.

Hadith 1

عن أبي سعيد الخدري رضي الله عنه ، أن رسول الله ﷺ اعتكف العشر الأول من رمضان ، ثم اعتكف العشر الأوسط في قبة تركية ، ثم اطلع رأسه فقال : إني اعتكف العشر الأول التمس هذه الليلة ، ثم اعتكف العشر الأوسط ، ثم أتيت فقبل لي : ((ألم في العشر الأخير ، فمن كان اعتكف معي فليعتكف العشر الأخير ، فقد أريت هذه الليلة ، ثم أنسيتها ، فقد رأيتني أسجد في ماء وطين من صبيحتها ، فالتسوها في عشر الأخير والتمسوا في كل وتر)). قال : فمطرت السماء تلك الليلة ، وكان المسجد على عريش فوق المسجد ، فبصرت عينا رسول الله ﷺ وعلى جبهته أثر الماء والطين عن صبيحة أحد وعشرون. (متفق عليه في المعنى. (مشكوة عن المتفق عليه باختلاف اللفظ)

Hadhrat Abu Saeed Khudri (Radhi Allahu anho) reports that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) once performed I'tikaaf in a tent (inside the masjid) for the first ten days of Ramadan. Thereafter, he extended it to the middle ten days. Thereafter, he put his head out of the tent and said: "Verily in search of 'Laylatul Qadr' did I perform I'tikaaf for the first ten days and extended it to the next ten days for the same purpose; then I was told that this night is in the last ten days; so those with me should also continue the I'tikaaf. I had indeed been shown that night and then was made to forget which one it shall be. And verily did I see myself prostrating to Allah with my forehead in mud on the morning after that night. Therefore, seek 'Laylatul Qadr' among the last ten nights of Ramadan; seek it among the odd ones."

Abu Saeed (Radhi Allahu anho) says, 'That same night it rained. The roof of the masjid leaked, and I saw Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) performing sujood (prostration) in muddy clay; and that was the morning of the 21st night.'

COMMENTARY

It used to be the general practice of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) to perform I'tikaaf in Ramadan. At times he used to remain in the masjid for the whole month and, during the last year of his life, he was in I'tikaaf for twenty days. Because he usually secluded himself in masjid for the last ten days of Ramadan, the 'Ulama' (Scholars) consider it Sunnah Muakkidah to perform I'tikaaf for that period.

From the above Hadith, it can be deduced that the major object behind I'tikaaf was to search for 'Laylatul Qadr'. What better manner can there be for this search than to remain in worship all the time, as in I'tikaaf, whether one is awake or asleep? Furthermore, in I'tikaaf one is free from all daily tasks and thus have time to devote to 'Zikrulla' (the remembrance of Allah) and meditation. Throughout Ramadan, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) remained in worship and particularly, when the last ten days came along; he set no limit in exerting himself. He himself remained awake throughout the night and set the example of waking his family for the same purpose. Aa'isha (Radhi Allahu anha) reports: "During the last ten days of Ramadan, Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) tied his 'Lungi' (trouser-cloth) tightly about him, staying awake all night, and waking his family for the purpose of worship." "Tied his 'Lungi' tightly about him", could mean either that he set no limits in exerting himself in worship; or that he completely avoided all forms of sexual contact with his wives.

Hadith 2

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله ﷺ قال : ((في المعتكف هو يعتكف الذنوب ويجري له من الحسنات كعامل الحسنات كلها)). (مشكوة عن ابن ماجه)

Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) relates that Rasulullah

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Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) relates that Rasulullah

(Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) said: "The person performing I'tikaaf remains free from sins, and is indeed given the same reward as for those who do righteous deeds (in spite of not having done these deeds) as a result of having been secluded in the masjid."

COMMENTARY

Now this Hadith points to two great benefits of I'tikaaf; First to avoid sin, the world around us is full of temptations and very often leads one into sin without even intending to do so. To commit sin in the blessed month of Ramadan is indeed a great damage to us. By remaining secluded in the masjid, one completely avoids the temptation to sin.

Secondly, it would appear outwardly that, when one is secluded in the masjid, a person is at a disadvantage unable to perform certain good deeds like joining in funeral prayers, visiting the sick, etc. Therefore, according to this Hadith, one is rewarded for these deeds even though not performing them. What a great favour from Allah! How great is Allah's bounty! A person does worship and gets the reward for ten! If only we can understand and fully appreciate these favours, which attract the Mercy of Allah, but we are very neglectful and place little value on our Deen (religion).

His Grace is on everyone

What opposition did he have if only you were worthy of something

Hadith 3

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أنه كان معتكفا في مسجد رسول الله ﷺ ، فأتاه رجل فسلم عليه ، ثم جلس فقال له ابن عباس : أراك مكتئبا حزينا . قال نعم يا ابن عم رسول الله لفلان علي حق ولاء ، و حرمة صاحب هذا القبر ما أقدر عليه ، قال ابن عباس رضي الله عنه : أفلا أكلمه فيك ؟ قال : إن أحببت . قال : فلتتعل ابن عباس ، ثم خرج من المسجد . فقال له الرجل : أنسيت ما كنت فيه ؟ قال : لا ، ولكني سمعت صاحب هذا القبر ﷺ والعهد به قريب ، فدمعت عيناه ، وهو يقول : ((من مشى في حاجة أخيه وبلغ

فيها كان خيرا له من اعتكاف عشر سنين . ومن اعتكف يوما ابتغاء وجه الله جعل الله بينه وبين النار ثلث خنادق أبعد مما بين الخافقين)). (رواه الطبراني في الأوسط و البيهقي و اللفظ له ، و الحاكم مختصرا و قال صحيح الإسناد كذا في الترغيب ، وقال السيوطي في الدرر صحيحه الحاكم و الضواري و البيهقي)

Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) reports that, while he was once in I'tikaaf in Masjid-e-Nabawi (Prophet's masjid) a certain man came to him, greeted him and sat down. Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) said to him, "I see that you seem sad and troubled." The man replied: "Yes, O son of the uncle of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam). I am indeed troubled in that I have an obligation to fulfill towards someone. I swear by the holiness of the inmate of this honoured resting place (Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) grave) that I am not able to fulfil this obligation." Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) inquired: "Shall I intercede with that person on your behalf?" The man replied "By all means, if you so wish." Ibn Abbas put on his shoes and proceeded out from the masjid. The man, seeing this, said: "Have you then forgotten you are in I'tikaaf?" Tears filling his eyes, Ibn Abbas replied: "No, but the occasion is still fresh in my mind when I heard the esteemed inmate of this tomb say: Whoever sets forth in the way of settling a necessary affair on behalf of his brother, that service shall be better for him than to perform I'tikaaf for ten years; and whosoever performs I'tikaaf for a day (thereby seeking the pleasure of Allah) will spread three trenches between him and the fire of Hell, the width of each trench being greater than the distance between Heaven and the Earth."

COMMENTARY

Two things are clear from this Hadith; we are told that, by way of reward for one day's I'tikaaf, Allah spreads three trenches between him and the fire of Jahannum. The width of which equals the distance between the

Heavens and the Earth. In Kashful Ghummah, Allaama Sha'raani relates a Hadith wherein Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam)

(Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) said: "The person performing I'tikaaf remains free from sins, and is indeed given the same reward as for those who do righteous deeds (in spite of not having done these deeds) as a result of having been secluded in the masjid."

COMMENTARY

Now this Hadith points to two great benefits of I'tikaaf; First to avoid sin, the world around us is full of temptations and very often leads one into sin without even intending to do so. To commit sin in the blessed month of Ramadan is indeed a great damage to us. By remaining secluded in the masjid, one completely avoids the temptation to sin.

Secondly, it would appear outwardly that, when one is secluded in the masjid, a person is at a disadvantage unable to perform certain good deeds like joining in funeral prayers, visiting the sick, etc. Therefore, according to this Hadith, one is rewarded for these deeds even though not performing them. What a great favour from Allah! How great is Allah's bounty! A person does worship and gets the reward for ten! If only we can understand and fully appreciate these favours, which attract the Mercy of Allah, but we are very neglectful and place little value on our Deen (religion).

His Grace is on everyone

What opposition did he have if only you were worthy of something

Hadith 3

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أنه كان معتكفا في مسجد رسول الله ﷺ ، فأتاه رجل فسلم عليه ، ثم جلس فقال له ابن عباس : أراك مكتئبا حزينا . قال نعم يا ابن عم رسول الله ﷺ لفلان علي حق ولاء ، و حرمة صاحب هذا القبر ما أقدر عليه ، قال ابن عباس رضي الله عنه : أفلا أكلمه فيك؟ قال : إن أحببت . قال : فلنتعل ابن عباس ، ثم خرج من المسجد . فقال له الرجل : أنسيت ما كنت فيه ؟ قال : لا ، ولكنني سمعت صاحب هذا القبر ﷺ والعهد به قريب ، فدمعت عيناه ، وهو يقول : ((من مشى في حاجة أخيه وبلغ

فيها كان خيرا له من اعتكاف عشر سنين . ومن اعتكف يوما ابتغاء وجه الله جعل الله بينه وبين النار ثلث خنادق أبعد مما بين الخافقين)). (رواه الطبراني في الأوسط و البيهقي و اللفظ له ، و الحاكم مختصرا و قال صحيح الإسناد كذا في الترغيب ، وقال السيوطي في الدرر صحيحه الحاكم و الضواري و البيهقي)

Hadhrat Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) reports that, while he was once in I'tikaaf in Masjid-e-Nabawi (Prophet's masjid) a certain man came to him, greeted him and sat down. Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) said to him, "I see that you seem sad and troubled." The man replied: "Yes, O son of the uncle of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam). I am indeed troubled in that I have an obligation to fulfill towards someone. I swear by the holiness of the inmate of this honoured resting place (Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) grave) that I am not able to fulfil this obligation." Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) inquired: "Shall I intercede with that person on your behalf?" The man replied "By all means, if you so wish." Ibn Abbas put on his shoes and proceeded out from the masjid. The man, seeing this, said: "Have you then forgotten you are in I'tikaaf?" Tears filling his eyes, Ibn Abbas replied: "No, but the occasion is still fresh in my mind when I heard the esteemed inmate of this tomb say: Whoever sets forth in the way of settling a necessary affair on behalf of his brother, that service shall be better for him than to perform I'tikaaf for ten years; and whosoever performs I'tikaaf for a day (thereby seeking the pleasure of Allah) will spread three trenches between him and the fire of Hell, the width of each trench being greater than the distance between Heaven and the Earth."

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Two things are clear from this Hadith; we are told that, by way of reward for one day's I'tikaaf, Allah spreads three trenches between him and the fire of Jahannum. The width of which equals the distance between the

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Secondly, we are told that performing a service for one's brother brings a reward greater than ten years I'tikaaf. For this reason Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) broke off his I'tikaaf; it was of course possible for him to continue it afterwards. The Sufis say that Allah has such sympathy for very few things as He has for a broken heart. It is for this reason that we have been warned of the appeals to Allah of that person whose heart has been hurt through unjust treatment or persecution. Whenever the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) appointed anyone as a Governor, in addition to advising him, he would warn him *وإتق دعوة المظلوم* to beware of the invocation (to Allah) of the persecuted.

*Fear the prayers of the oppressed
When he prays it is welcomed with acceptance*

Note that I'tikaaf terminates when one leaves the mosque even for a task on behalf of a fellow Muslim. When that I'tikaaf is 'Qadhaa', it will mean that it has to be performed 11 ver gain. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) never left the mosque during I'tikaaf except for the calls of nature and Wudhu. As for Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) leaving the mosque to do some favour to a friend, it was in the spirit that is reminiscent of the soldier lying near death on the battle field of Yarmouk, refusing to drink water until his wounded comrade had been given the drink. On the other hand it is quite possible that Ibn Abbas (Radhi Allahu anho) was performing Nafil I'tikaaf, in which case it was permissible for him to break it off.

Hadith 4

Hadhrat Aisha (Radhi Allahu anha) narrates that Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) said, "If a Muslim performs I'tikaaf with hope of gaining reward, then all his previous sins are forgiven."

Hadith 5

قال الزهري عجباً للناس تركوا الاعتكاف وقد كان رسول الله ﷺ يفعل الشيء ويتركه ولم يترك الاعتكاف منذ دخل المدينة إلى أن مات. ومواظبة النبي ﷺ دليل كونه سنة في الأصل ولأن الاعتكاف تقرب إلى الله تعالى بمجاورة بيته والإعراض عن الدنيا والإقبال على خدمته لطلب الرحمة وطمع المغفرة.
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Imam Zuhri states I am astonished that people have stopped a Sunnat like I'tikaaf, yet the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) performed some actions and occasionally left them out. Since he made Hijrah to Madina Munawwarah he constantly performed I'tikaaf till his death and never missed it (if he ever missed it he made Qadhaa of it as proven from Hadith). The Prophet's (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) constant action (without criticising those who do not perform it) is proof that it is considered Sunnat. Hence, by performing I'tikaaf in the house of Allah one achieves closeness to Him, turns his attention away from the World and draws himself closer to gaining blessing from Allah, and desires that Allah forgive his sins. May Allah bestow us with this great blessing?

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Definition of I'tikaaf

Literal Definition

The word I'tikaaf is derived from 'Akafa' a verb used both in the intransitive and transitive sense meaning either 'to remain' or 'to stop oneself'. It is written in 'Tahtawi' the commentary of 'Marakiyul Falah' It is clear if 'to stop oneself' meaning is used then it is from the transitive verb, if 'to remain' & 'to stand' meaning is used, these come from the intransitive verb. Pg 421²

In the Quran there are six different places where the literal definition has been used:

1. Surah Bakara, الآية ﴿أَن طَهِّرَا لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ﴾ 'We commanded Ibrahim and Ismail that they should purify My House (the Kaba at Makka) for those who are circumambulating it, or staying (I'tikaaf), or bowing or prostrating themselves (there, in prayer)'.
2. الآية ﴿وَلَا تَبَاشَرُوهُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ﴾ 'And do not have sexual relations with them (your wives) while you are in I'tikaaf (i.e. confining oneself in a mosque for prayers and invocations and leaving the worldly activities) in the mosque.'
3. Surah Aaraf where it is mentioned under the context of Banu Israeel, الآية ﴿فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَامٍ لَهُمْ﴾ 'And they came across a people devoted to some of their idols (in worship).'
4. Surah Anbiyaa where it states. ﴿مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ﴾ 'When he (Ibrahim) said to his fathernad his people: What are these images, to which you are devoted?'

Two benefits can be derived from these verses: That I'tikaaf is recommended and advisable, Secondly, that I'tikaaf was the custom of previous nations who did I'tikaaf for their false statues.

Islamic Definition

The Islamic definition of 'I'tikaaf' is that a mature intelligent Muslim, with the intention of reward, spends some time in a masjid which has five times regular prayers performed in it.³ This definition has been used in 'Marakiyul Falah'.⁴

It is mentioned in 'Bahrur Raiq', 'To spend some time is a 'Principle' and to spend this time in a masjid with intention are its 'Conditions'. Similarly to be a Muslim, intelligent, free from menstrual and post-natal bleeding are all 'conditions' of I'tikaaf.⁵

Types of I'tikaaf

There are 3 types of I'tikaaf; Wajib, Sunnat Muakkida and Nafil

Wajib:

By making a promise or vow (Nazar) I'tikaaf becomes Wajib, irrespective if the promise is dependent or independent of conditions, e.g. if one makes a promise 'if my work is completed then I will make I'tikaaf for certain days', then if that work is

³ This is the view of Imam Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullahi alayhe) that Itikaaf can only be performed in a masjid which has five times regular prayers. Imam Abu Yusuf/Ahmed ibn Hanbal (Rahmatullahi alayhim) are of the opinion that any masjid is suitable irrespective if five times prayers happen or not. Some have taken the opinion of Abu Hanifah whilst Allama Saruji has taken Abu Yusuf/Ahmed ibn Hanbal's opinion. Itikaaf is allowed in a Jame masjid in all cases, irrespective of five times prayers are offered or not

في مسجد جماعة هو ماله إمام و مؤذن أدت فيه الخمس أولا، وعن الإمام اشتراط أداء الخمس فيه وصححه بعضهم وقالوا يصح في كل مسجد وصححه السروجي، وهو اختيار الطحاوي. قال الحيز الرملي: وهو ليس بخصوصا في زمانه فيبني أن يعول عليه اه. و أما الجامع فيصح فيه مطلقا اتفاقا (رد المحتار على هامش رد المحتار ١٢٩/٢)

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completed then I'tikaaf will become Wajib. The second example is if one says, 'I make a promise of I'tikaaf or make I'tikaaf incumbent upon myself': How many days intention he has in mind, I'tikaaf of those will become Wajib on him.⁶

Sunnat Muakkida:

The second type of I'tikaaf is Sunnat Muakkida Alal-Kifayah and this is carried out during the last ten days of Ramadhan. Since the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) migrated to Madinah Munawwarah till his death he always had the habit of performing I'tikaaf during the last ten days of Ramadhan. For this reason the author of *Hidayah* writes, 'it is correct to say that it is Sunnat Muakkida because Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) regularly performed I'tikaaf of the last ten days, and doing something regularly is proof of it being Sunnat.'⁷

Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) performed I'tikaaf consistently every year, once when he missed the I'tikaaf he performed Qadhaa in the month of Shawwal. The Respected Wives of the Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) also performed I'tikaaf in their homes after Rasulullah's (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) death. This is evident that it is Sunnat Muakkidah. The author of *Marakiyul Falah* writes, 'It is Sunnat Muakkida Alal-Kifayah during the last ten days of Ramadhan.'⁸ Allamah Alauddin Haskafi writes, 'It is Sunnat Alal-Kifayah as is mentioned in 'Burhan' etc as there was no criticism levied of those companions who did not perform it.'⁹

⁶ - في البدائع وإنما يصير واجبا بأحد أمرين أحدهما قول وهو النذر المطلق بأن يقول الله على أن اعتكف يوما أو شهرا أو نحو ذلك أو علقه بشرط بأن يقول إن شفى الله مريضاً أو إن قدم فلان فله على أن اعتكف شهراً أو نحو ذلك اهـ (١٠٨) ⁷ - والصحيح أنه سنة مؤكدة ، لأن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم واظب عليه في العشر الأواخر من رمضان والمواظبة دليل السنة (الهداية ٢٠٩)

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That is why if any male or female performs this I'tikaaf then this sunnat will be accepted, otherwise all the locality will be sinful of missing a Sunnat Muakkida. If there are various masjids in a town then this I'tikaaf will have to be performed in every single masjid, or if I'tikaaf is performed in any masjid the Sunnat will be accepted. It is mentioned in *Tahtawi Alad-Dur* on pg 758, 'if a person performed I'tikaaf then the responsibility of performing Sunnat will be discharged from everybody else.'¹⁰ Moulana Abdul Hai (R.A) writes in '*Insaf fi Hukmil I'tikaaf*', 'I'tikaaf essentially is Sunnat Kifayah and this is the truth, is it Sunnat Kifayah on the locality similar to funeral prayers or is it Sunnat Kifayah on all the locality similar to reading Tarawih prayers in congregation?'¹¹

Fasting is compulsory for both Wajib and Sunnat Muakkida I'tikaaf, without fasting the I'tikaaf will not be acceptable. Therefore if one only performs I'tikaaf during the night this will be considered Nafil and not Sunnat. Fasting is not a requirement for Nafil I'tikaaf; it is acceptable without a fast as mentioned in 'Zahir Riwayat'. If one promises to make I'tikaaf in the month of Ramadhan then the compulsory fasts of Ramadhan will be acceptable for the I'tikaaf, there is no need to keep separate fasts.¹²

The period of Sunnat Muakkidah I'tikaaf starts from sunset on 20th Ramadhan until the moon is sighted for Eid. Therefore on 20th Ramadhan after Asar prayers one should be in the masjid,

¹⁰ - إذا قام بها البعض ولو فردا سقطت عن الباقي. (طحطاوي على الدر ١/٧٥٩) ¹¹ - الاعتكاف على تقدير كونه سنة كفاية كما هو الحق هل هو سنة على أهل البلدة كصلوة الجنازة أم سنة كفاية على أهل كل محلة كصلوة التراويح بالجماعة فظاهر عباراتهم يقتضي الأول ففي مجمع الأنهر شرح ملتقى الأبحر عند ذكر الأقوال وقيل سنة على الكفاية حتى ترك أهل بلدة بأسرهم يلحقهم الإساءة وإلا فلا كالتأذين. (الإنصاف في أحكام الاعتكاف ١٦٢) ¹² - أن الصوم شرط أيضا في الاعتكاف المستنون لأنه مقدر بالعشر الأخير حتى لو اعتكفه بلا صوم لمرض أو سفر ينهي أن لا يصح عنه بل يكون نفلا فلا تحصل به إقامة سنة الكفاية اهـ. (الدر المختار على هامش رد المختار ٢/١٣٠)

completed then I'tikaaf will become Wajib. The second example is if one says, 'I make a promise of I'tikaaf or make I'tikaaf incumbent upon myself': How many days intention he has in mind, I'tikaaf of those will become Wajib on him.⁶

Sunnat Muakkida:

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make their intention and remain there until the sighting of Eid moon, irrespective of if the moon is sighted on 29th or 30th of Ramadhan. As soon as the moon is sighted I'tikaaf will end.¹³

Nafil I'tikaaf

The third type of I'tikaaf is Nafil. There is no limitation in terms of days or time, any person can perform Nafil I'tikaaf for whatever time that suits them. Fasting is not necessary for this type of I'tikaaf. Without fasting if a person makes intention and spends some time in the masjid then they will gain reward of I'tikaaf, when they leave the masjid the I'tikaaf will finish and there will not be any Qadhaa for leaving.¹⁴

My teacher Hadhrat Sheikh ul Hadith (Damat barakatuhum) writes under the heading 'Nafil I'tikaaf' that it is desirable for anyone entering a masjid to make the niyyah (intention) of I'tikaaf for the period of remaining in the masjid, so that while they are in 'Ibaadah' they also earn the reward of I'tikaaf. I always observed my late father make Niyyah for I'tikaaf whenever he entered the masjid. Occasionally by way of teaching and reminding his followers, he would raise his voice when reciting the words for Niyyah. (*Fazail Ramadhan* pg 48)

This servant would like to add that I have always observed Hadhrat Aqdas Sheikh ul Hadith (Damat barakatuhum) doing likewise. May Allah Ta'alah give us tawfiq and help us follow in their footsteps?

It is best that you enter the Masjid (Jamaat Khana) with right foot and read the dua **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَ الصَّلَاةِ وَالسَّلَامِ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَ نَوَيْتُ الْإِعْتِكَافَ**

¹³ - والمشهور عند مشائخنا أن يدخل المعتكف بعد العصر قبل غروب الشمس من اليوم العشرين من شهر رمضان ليدخل

الليلة الحادية وعشرين في الاعتكاف. (رسائل الأركان ٢٣١)

¹⁴ - وأقله نقلاً ساعة من ليل أو نهار عند محمد وهو ظاهر الرواية عن الإمام لبناء النفل على المسامحة وبه يفتي ... فلو شرع في نفيه ثم قطعه لا يلزمه قضاؤه لأنه لا يشترط له الصوم على ظاهر المذهب. (الدر المختار على هامش رد المحتار ٢/١٣١)

By doing this you will have performed sunnat method of entry into masjid and will also have performed intention of I'tikaaf.

Where is the best place to perform I'tikaaf

I'tikaaf is a worship linked with the masjid; therefore it is necessary to perform I'tikaaf in a recognised (Sharee) masjid. Women are not allowed to enter the masjid; therefore their 'place of prayer' is considered a masjid. It is mentioned in '*Risalah Arkan*' The masjid is a condition of I'tikaaf, I'tikaaf will not be counted outside a masjid as Ameerul Mumineen Ali (Radhi Allahu anho) never performed I'tikaaf but in a masjid. Narrated by Ibn Abi Shaibah & Abdur Razzaq pg 229¹⁵

Some people consider that the masjid is not integral for I'tikaaf, their argument being I'tikaaf means to be secluded and masjid is not necessary to achieve this purpose. The response to this kind of argument is seclusion for worship is very commendable, if one secludes himself or herself in the home, mountain or an open field they will certainly reap the rewards. But the worship which is recognised and rewarded, i.e. I'tikaaf, for that the masjid is a necessary component.¹⁶

The best place for I'tikaaf for males is the Masjid al Haram, then Masjid Nabawi (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam), then Baitul Muqaddas. Thereafter comes the Jame Masjid in ones own town, then the masjid with the most Musalli (observant), lastly the

¹⁵ - فالمسجد شرط في الاعتكاف ولا يكون اعتكاف دون المسجد لما عن أمير المؤمنين علي رضي الله عنه لا اعتكاف إلا في المسجد رواه ابن أبي شيبة و عبد الرزاق. (رسائل الأركان ٢٢٩)

¹⁶ - قال قوم من الصوفية لا يشترط المسجد للاعتكاف لأن الاعتكاف اعتزال لعبادة الله تعالى ولا تخصيص له بالمسجد ونحن نقول الاعتزال أمر حسن فمن اعتزل لعبادة الله تعالى ولو في الصحراء أو بالبيت يكون مثاباً ونحن لا نمنع ذلك لكسر كلامنا في الاعتكاف الذي هو عبادة في ذاته ما هو فنقول هذه العبادة المعتبرة في الشرع المسماة بالاعتكاف لا يكون إلا في مسجد جماعة. اهـ (رسائل الأركان ٢٢٩)

masjid nearest to ones home.¹⁷

Some places in the western world do not allow a Shari Masjid (Masjid built from foundation), therefore five times daily prayers in congregation with Athaan and Tarawih prayers are performed in houses. It is permissible to perform I'tikaaf in these houses.

Rules of I'tikaaf for women

It is Sunnat for women to perform I'tikaaf, the Respected Wives of Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) performed I'tikaaf after his death. Hence the Fuqaha write that females should perform I'tikaaf in their masjid (prayer room set aside in the homes), however if no such demarcated place exists a place should be set-aside for this purpose. It is Makrooh for women to perform I'tikaaf in the masjid, also it is undesirable to perform I'tikaaf without the consent of the husband.¹⁸

Rules of I'tikaaf for children

Allamah Shami (Rahmatullahi alayhi) has made it clear that maturity is not a requirement for I'tikaaf, if a child close to maturity performs I'tikaaf then it will be acceptable.¹⁹

Types of I'tikaaf

One performing I'tikaaf should remain engaged in remembering, worshiping, and praying etc to Allah. To study, learn and teach

¹⁷ - فافضل الاعتكاف أن يكون في المسجد الحرام ثم في مسجد النبوي ثم في المسجد الأقصى ثم في المسجد الجامع ثم في المساجد العظام التي كثر أهلها. اهـ (بدائع الصنائع ١١٣)

¹⁸ - لبث امرأة في مسجد بيتها ويكره في المسجد ولا يصح في غير موضع صلاتها من بيتها اهـ. الرد المحتار ١٢٩ / ٢ (وفي الدر المختار ولا ينبغي لها الاعتكاف بلا إذنه. اهـ (الدر المختار ١٢٩ / ٢)

¹⁹ - وأما البلوغ فليس بشرط حتى يصح اعتكاف الصبي العاقل كالصوم وكذا الذكورية. (الرد المحتار ٢/٣٢٢)

religious books are all allowed practices. To discuss necessary things is also allowed. To sit quietly considering it an act of worship is Makrooh, hence to talk about worldly affairs, to backbite, to make business transaction with the presence of stock, to argue, quarrel are all Makrooh and disallowed.²⁰

If a teacher wants to teach, write correspondence then it is allowed, bearing in mind that the students should not be so young that they are not fully acquainted with cleanliness, hygiene and respect of the masjid. If stock is not present then business transactions may be carried out. To get married, put on perfume and apply ointment to the head are all acceptable.²¹

One is allowed to veil their place of I'tikaaf from other people. Rasulullah (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) used to have a tent erected, if one does not have a veil then there is nothing wrong with that.

Rules about the Mu'takif leaving the masjid

The person doing I'tikaaf should spend all his time in the Masjid, hence eating, sleeping, and all other needs that can be fulfilled within the manners pertaining to the Masjid will be allowed. He is not allowed to step outside the masjid to fulfill these needs, otherwise the I'tikaaf will be nullified. Those religious and natural needs that cannot be fulfilled within the masjid are permissible to complete outside the masjid.

Religious Needs

If a person is performing I'tikaaf in a masjid that has no Friday

²⁰ - أن لا يتكلم إلا بخير ويلزم التلاوة والحديث والعلم وتدريسه و سيرة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم والأنبياء عليهم

السلام وأخبار الصالحين وكتابة أمور الدين. كذا في فتح القدير (الفتاوى الهندية ١/٢١٢)

²¹ - ويلبس المعتكف و يطيب و يدهن رأسه كذا في خلاصة. (فتاوى الهندية ١/٢١٣)

congregational prayers performed, then he is allowed to leave the masjid to read Friday prayers in another local masjid. He should leave the masjid late enough so that he can read his Tahiiyatul Masjid prayers and Sunnat in the other masjid just before Khutba. He is also allowed to read 6 Sunnats after Jumma Prayers, he should not read more than that but return to his original masjid. If someone stays in the same masjid longer or decides to complete the I'tikaaf in that masjid then it would be Makrooh.

If someone was evicted from the masjid or the masjid collapsed then he should immediately go to another masjid and complete the I'tikaaf. If one fears for one's life or belongings in a masjid then it is permissible for him to change masjid for I'tikaaf. Likewise, if the masjid heating system fails and it is difficult to remain in the cold then it will be permissible to transfer to another masjid.²²

A Muadhin (person giving Adhan) is allowed to climb the minaret, irrespective if the door to the minaret is in the courtyard of the masjid. If someone besides the Muazzin performs Adhan then it will be acceptable and the I'tikaaf will not break.²³

If ablution facilities are not available within the masjid for one to perform Nafil prayers then they are allowed to go out. It is not necessary to perform Wudhu for reading the Quran, as one can read without touching it, hence he is not allowed to leave the

²² - ويخرج للجمعة حين تزول الشمس، إن كان معتكفه قريبا من الجامع بحيث لو انتظر زوال الشمس لا تقوته الخطية و الجمعة. وإذا كان بحيث تقوته لم ينتظر زوال الشمس لكنه يخرج في وقت يمكنه أن يأتي الجامع فيصلّي أربع ركعات قبل الأذان عند المنبر وبعد الجمعة يمكث بقدر ما يصلّي أربع ركعات أو سنا على حسب اختلافهم في سنة إلا الجمعة كذا في الكافي. فإن مكث يوما أو ليلة أتم اعتكافه لا يفسده و يكره كذا في السراج الوهاج. فإن خرج من المسجد بعذر بأن الهدم المسجد أو أخرج مكرها فدخل مسجدا آخر من ساعته لم يفسد اعتكافه استحسانا هكذا في البدائع. وكذا لو خاف على نفسه أو ماله خرج هكذا في التبيين. اه (فتاوى الهندية ١/٢١٢)

²³ - وشرعية كعيد وأذان لو مؤذنا وباب المنارة خارج المسجد. اه (الدر المختار على هامش الدر المختار ٢/١٣٢)

masjid for that purpose. One is not allowed to leave the masjid to wash the hands before or after eating, facilities should be available for them to wash the hands inside the masjid.

To engage unnecessarily in worldly affairs during I'tikaaf is Makrooh Tahrimi, e.g. to do unnecessary business transactions. If something is important and a substitute is not available to carry it out then it will be permissible providing the item is not brought in the masjid. Some people prepare tea or paan (beetle-leaf) and bring it in the masjid to sell to the people who are performing I'tikaaf, this should not be done. If it is necessary send someone else to buy it then bring it in.

Natural Needs

Natural needs are those that a person cannot live without. If these cannot be fulfilled in the masjid, one is allowed to leave the masjid, e.g. to urinate, to excrete, to bath after ejaculation, to perform wudhu. If no one is available to bring the food then bring it yourself. If someone has the habit of smoking, then it is best they give up this habit for a few days, if they are unable to then they are allowed to leave the masjid. One is allowed to leave the masjid to break wind.²⁴

It is written in *Fatawa Rasheeda* Pg 375 that it is permissible for a person to leave masjid after Magrib prayers to smoke, clean the mouth of bad odour and return back to the masjid.

If there are facilities to perform wudhu within the masjid and you are able to ensure droplets do not fall onto the masjid floor then you are not allowed to leave the masjid to perform wudhu.²⁵

²⁴ - حاجة الإنسان طبيعية كبول وغائط وغسل لو احتلم (الدر المختار ١٣٢ / ٢) ولا يمكث بعد فراغه من الطهور لأن ما ثبت بالضرورة يتقدر بقدرها. اه (الهداية شرح البداية ٢١٠)

²⁵ - بأن كان فيه بركة ماء أو موضع معد للطهارة أو اغتسل في إناء بحيث لا يصيب المسجد المستعمل

After completing the needs for which you are allowed to leave the masjid you should return immediately and not spend more time than necessary out of the masjid. If there various places where you can fulfill your needs, then to chose the further option or to use your home facilities instead of the masjid is not desirable. If you are unable to completely satisfy your needs or are able to complete your needs quickly at the further option then it will be allowed.²⁶

If one leaves the masjid for a natural or religious need and at the same time does other work for which he was not allowed to leave the masjid, then if it does not take much time it will be allowed, e.g. visiting the sick, having a bath whilst using the lavatory or washing clothes whilst taking a bath, then this is allowed.²⁷

If a person is performing I'tikaaf but has to go and sign at the Job Centre or attend an important hospital appointment then in such circumstances it will be permissible to leave the masjid.

Some Mu'takifeen adopt wrong methods in these sorts of rules, e.g. one went to perform bath for Friday Prayers and had the intention of using the toilet and wasted many minutes queuing for their turn, they should not do this. The principle is that if Shari at allows one to leave the masjid to fulfil needs, then as a secondary matter one can carry these other kinds of work out. For this purpose the I'tikaaf will not break.

اه. وقال في البدائع فإن كان بحيث يتلوث بالماء المستعمل يمنع منه لأن تنظيف المسجد واجب. اه (رد المختار ٢/١٣٢)

²⁶ - واحتلف فيما لو كان له بيتان فأتى البعيد منهما قيل فسد وقيل لا وينبغي أن يخرج على القولين ما لو ترك بيت الخلاء للمسجد القريب وأتى بيته. (رد المختار ٢/١٣٢)

²⁷ - لو خرج لها ثم ذهب لعيادة مريض أو صلاة جنازة من غير أن يكون خرج لذلك قصدا فإنه جائز كما في البحر عس البدائع. اه (رد المختار ٢/١٣٢)

If one leaves the masjid without a valid reason, mistake or not, I'tikaaf will break. There are varied opinions in this matter, according to Imam Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullahi alayhi) I'tikaaf will break even if one goes out for a little while. Imam Abu Yusuf (Rahmatullahi alayhi) and Imam Muhammad (Rahmatullahi alayhi) views are if one spends a major part of the day outside then it would break. Sheikh Ibn Humam (R.A) prefers the view of Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullahi alayhi) and Allama Ibn Nujaim prefers the other view.

Allama Sarakhsi in '*Khulasatul Fatawa*' writes that there is ease in the views of Imam Muhammad/ Abu Yusuf (Rahmatullahi alayhim)²⁸ hence one should ideally act in conforming to the views of Abu Hanifah (Rahmatullahi alayhi), otherwise there is easiness in acting on the other view.²⁹

One should remember there is no time limit for Nafl I'tikaaf, but it is best to keep I'tikaaf for one day with a fast, although one is allowed to keep I'tikaaf for less. If one leaves the masjid without a reason then the I'tikaaf will be complete without breaking nor will Qadhaa have to be made, if he re-enters the masjid he should renew his intention for I'tikaaf.

Sunnat Muakkida I'tikaaf is for a period of 10 days, hence to leave the masjid without a Religious or Natural needs breaks the I'tikaaf. The I'tikaaf also has the same ruling. Those needs which are neither religious or natural but fall within the category of important, if one leaves the masjid to fulfil them, then although he will not be sinful for breaking I'tikaaf yet the I'tikaaf will be nullified, e.g. if one receives a Court Order to be present at a Court hearing or due to an illness has to attend doctors surgery or

²⁸ - قولهما أبسر على المسلمين. (خلاصة الفتاوى ٢/٦٨)

²⁹ - ولو خرج من المسجد بغير عذر فسد اعتكافه عند أبي حنيفة لوجود المنافي، وهو القياس وقال لا يفسد حتى يكون من نصف يوم وهو الاستحسان اه (هداية ١١٢)

has to make funeral arrangements for someone close to him, etc.³⁰

Things that break I'tikaaf

Sexual intercourse will nullify I'tikaaf. This is the case regardless of whether it was intentional or in forgetfulness, during the day or at night, inside the masjid or outside, whether ejaculation happened or not, in all cases the I'tikaaf will be nullified. All those act which are precursor to sex e.g. fondling, kissing, touching with affection, ejaculation by brushing against thighs etc are all disallowed, but until ejaculation occurs the I'tikaaf will not be nullified.³¹

One is allowed to speak to his wife during I'tikaaf and she is also allowed to enter the masjid providing that she fulfils the requirements of Purdah (veiling). To have a wet dream, ejaculation due to constant thinking, eat in forgetfulness whilst fasting, fall unconscious are instances that have no effect on the I'tikaaf. If one has stayed unconscious or in a state of madness for more than a day and has been unable to make intention for fasting then the I'tikaaf will not be correct, and Qadhaa (repeat) will be necessary.³²

In I'tikaaf if a lady starts to menstruate or have postnatal bleeding then the I'tikaaf will break and Qadhaa will have to be made. If the I'tikaaf was Sunnat Muakkidah then only that particular days

³⁰ وأما ما لا يغلب كإتقاء الغريق والهدام المسجد فمسقط للإثم لا للبطلان. اه (در المختار ١٣٣) ومن الأعذار المرض إلا أنه لا يأثم إذا كان الخروج بعذر. (خلاصة الفتاوى ٢٨)

³¹ وبطل بوطء في فرج أنزل أم لا ولو كان وطئه خارج المسجد ليلا أو نهارا عامدا أو ناسيا في الأصح لأن حالته مذكورة وبطل بإتزال بقبلة أو لمس أو تفخيذ ولو لم يتزل لم يبطل وإن حرم الكل. اه (الدر المختار ١٢)

³² - ولا يبطل بإتزال بفكر أو نظر ولا بسكر ليلا ولا بأكل ناسيا لبقاء الصوم بخلاف أكله عمدا وردته وكذا إغملؤه وجنونه إن دام أياما فإن دام جنونه سنة قضاء استحسانا. (الدر المختار ١٣٦ / ١)

Qadhaa with fasting will be made.³³

If someone ate something, which made him intoxicated, then this will not break the I'tikaaf. Likewise if someone ate an item, which was snatched or stolen then although this action is a sin, yet it will have no affect on the I'tikaaf.

When making a vow if one makes an exception e.g. to go to read Janaza prayers or to visit the sick, then he will be allowed to leave the masjid.³⁴

If one intentionally ate or drank something during the day then fast and I'tikaaf will both break. If one eats by mistake the fast and I'tikaaf will not break.³⁵

Qadhaa of I'tikaaf (repeating it)

If I'tikaaf was Wajib and it breaks then it will be Wajib to make Qadhaa. If I'tikaaf was Sunnat Muakkidah then its Qadhaa will also be Sunnat. There is a difference of opinion as to how many days Qadhaa will be made for Sunnat Muakkida I'tikaaf. According to Imam Abu Yusuf one will have to make Qadhaa of all ten days, according to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Ahmed the person will only make Qadhaa of the day the I'tikaaf broke. Nafil I'tikaaf does not break but is completed as soon as one leaves the masjid, hence there is no Qadhaa of Nafil I'tikaaf.³⁶

³³ - ولو حضت في حالة الاعتكاف فسد اعتكافه اه. (بدائع الصنائع ١١٦)

³⁴ - كما في الدر المختار عن التاترخانية لو شرط وقت النذر أن يخرج لعيادة مريض وصلاة جنازة وحضور مجلس علم جاز ذلك اه. (الدر المختار ٢/١٣٤)

³⁵ - ولو أكل أو شرب في النهار عامدا فسد صومه وفسد اعتكافه لفساد الصوم ولو أكل ناسيا لا يفسد اعتكافه لأنه لا يفسد صومه والأصل أن ما كان من محظورات الاعتكاف وهو ما منع عنه لأجل الاعتكاف لا لأجل الصوم لا يختلف فيه العمد والسهر والنهار والليل كالجماع والخروج من المسجد اه. (بدائع الصنائع ١١٦)

³⁶ - فيظهر من بحث ابن المصنف لزوم الاعتكاف المستون بالشروع وإن لم يزم قضاء جميعه أو باقيه مخرج على قول أي

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وحونه إن دام أياما فإن دام حونه سنة قضاه استحسانا. (الدر المختار ١٣٦ / ١)

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حاز ذلك اهـ. (الدر المختار ٢/١٣٤)

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لا يفسد صومه والأصل أن ما كان من محظورات الاعتكاف وهو ما منع عنه لأجل الاعتكاف لا لأجل الصوم لا يختلف فيه

العمد والسهو والنهار والليل كالجماع والخروج من المسجد اهـ. (بدائع الصنائع ١١٦)

³⁶ - فيظهر من بحث ابن المصنف لزوم الاعتكاف المستأنف بالشروع وإن لم يقرأ جميعه أو باقيه يخرج على قول أبي

Miscellaneous

If one makes intention to do daytime I'tikaaf only, then it is acceptable and he will not have to do I'tikaaf during the night. If one makes no exceptions then he will have to do consecutive nightly I'tikaaf also.³⁷

If the Mu'takif's feet are in the masjid and parts of his body are out of the masjid as this is not considered to be out of the masjid it will have no effect on the I'tikaaf. There is a Hadith in 'Bukhari Shareef' narrated by Hadhrat Aisha (Radhi Allahu anha) that the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) used to take his head out of the masjid and she used to comb his hair. (Bahrur Raik)

If one vows to do I'tikaaf of Ramadhan but has not clarified the year, then he is at liberty to complete his I'tikaaf during any Ramadhan he wants. If he clarified that it will be this Ramadhan then he will have to do I'tikaaf during the coming Ramadhan. In these instances the fast of Ramadhan will suffice for the I'tikaaf, otherwise he will have to perform I'tikaaf with separate fasts. (Rasail Arkaan)

It is necessary to adhere to the respect and manners of the masjid. One should not do any actions that are contrary to this. Some people are in the habit of storing household items unnecessarily in the masjid and don't even consider cleanliness, make the carpet dirty whilst eating etc dirty, store dirty and napaak (impure) clothes in the masjid. One should refrain from all these kinds of actions. If one has to cut his hair they should take care it does not fall everywhere, otherwise it will not be allowed as it contrary to the etiquette of the masjid.

يوسف أما على قول غيره فيقضي اليوم الذي أفسده لاستقلال كل يوم بنفسه اهـ. (رد المحتار ١٣١ / ٢)

³⁷ - من نذر أن يعتكف أياماً، يلزمه اعتكاف الأيام بلياليها. شرط التتابع لفظاً أو لا إلا أن يتوي الأيام خاصة لأنه نسوي

حقيقة الكلام اهـ. (رسائل الأركان ٢٣٣)

If one has a wet dream then immediately upon waking make 'Tayammum' and leave the masjid for bath. To remain in the masjid or roam around in this state is not allowed. The clothes and blanket should also be cleaned as impure items cannot be kept in the masjid.

Permissibility of group I'tikaaf

The previously mentioned narration of Abu Saeed Khudri (Radhi Allahu anho), mentioned in Bukhari & Muslim, indicates that the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) made I'tikaaf for a whole month with a group of his Companions. Initially he intended I'tikaaf for 10 days then he intended I'tikaaf for the following ten days. When he was informed from the unseen that 'Laylatul Qadr' lies within the last ten days then he made intention for the last ten days. Likewise if one intends to do I'tikaaf for the whole month in the company of a group of people then they will be acting on the Sunnat of the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam).

One can encourage people to do I'tikaaf as can be observed from the Prophet's (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) saying to his companions, 'Whoever has performed I'tikaaf with me they should also perform I'tikaaf of the last ten days.' To have doubts that this is sunnat and to consider encouragement as innovation is excessiveness and a denial of something proven in Bukhari and Muslim.

Encouragement has been the actions of our elders e.g. the author of 'Imam Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Dehlawi' writes that Hadhrat Shah Abdul-Aziz Sahib said, 'Many Saints of this era and friends of my father performed I'tikaaf in the masjid.' Regarding this Shah Sahib tried to call his friends and students in the month of Ramadhan, hence he wrote a letter to Shah Abu-Saeed Sahib, 'If you feel the intensity of love then spend your Ramadhan with us.'

What is the secret behind I'tikaaf in the last ten days of Ramadhan?

Hadhrat Moulana Abdul-Hai Lakhnawi writes in his booklet, 'Insaaf fi Hukmil I'tikaaf' that the Prophet (Sallallahu alayhi Wasallam) used to perform I'tikaaf in the last ten days of Ramadhan regularly, what reason lies behind this? The answer is his intention was to attain the rewards of 'Laylatul Qadr', because according to the famous and correct opinion 'Laylatul Qadr' happens in the last ten days of Ramadhan. A person performing I'tikaaf should busy himself in worship and prayer in Laylatul Qadr.

May Allah Ta'ala grant me and all the Mutakifeen the ability to carry out I'tikaaf with all its etiquette and grant us His true love and dedication and make us from His truthful servants? Aameen

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Hidaya Awwalayn	Burhan-uddin Ali ibn Abibakr Al-Fargani
Imam Shah Waliullah Dehlawi Mazahiri	Moulana Abdul-Qayyum

